

International Communication Association Conference 2024  
(June 20-June 24, Gold Coast Australia)  
International Association for Media and Communication Research 2024  
(30 June – 4 July, Christchurch New Zealand)

**From Provocation to Possibility?  
Revisiting the 'Critical' in Environmental Communication\***

Combined Pre and Post Conference Symposium  
Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University, Australia  
June 26, 2024

**Organisers:** Kerrie Foxwell-Norton (Griffith University, Australia), Pieter Maesele (University of Antwerp, Belgium), Maitreyee Mishra (Manipal University, India), Joana Diaz-Pont (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain), Hanna E. Morris (University of Toronto) Franzisca Weder (University of Queensland, Australia) & Annika Egan-Sjölander (Umeå University, Sweden)

**Keynote Addresses:**

Professor Silvio R Waisbord, The George Washington University and  
Professor Libby Lester, Monash University

Daily, we are witness to the devastating ecological impacts and forecast, if not arrived, unfathomable risks driven by industrial capitalism and its motherlode conclusion, climate change. In these times, Environmental Communication- as a research field within communication studies - commands a central stage, especially in the era of the Anthropocene (Lewis and Maslin, 2015). The increased interest in environmental communication from within and outside of the academy, both as a discipline and a practice, prompts us to critical self-reflexivity. What and who is environmental communication for? What perspectives dominate the field and how well do they work if we wish to engage with social and political practices? Our post-conference is intended to raise questions, and to challenge Environmental Communication scholars to examine their own assumptions and practices, with the aim of deepening our field's impact, engagement and affiliation (Freedman, 2017), that corresponds with the urgency of ecological and climate crises.

In 2018, Comfort and Park's systematic review of the field highlighted the uneven flow of work from nations noting the dominance of U.S.-based studies and the much lesser attention paid to low income/material nations. Similarly, Goyanes (2020:359) also reported a Western bias in the editorial boards of major communication journals concluding that these are governed by a handful of countries, especially North America and English-speaking countries. Waisbord's (2016, 2019) critical reflections on the discipline of communication studies offers similar conclusions about the impact of origins and uneven flows of scholarship and resources.

To what extent then has Environmental Communication, in its flows of scholarship, methods, publications, conferences and so on, established its own disciplinary norms and behaviours - the Environmental Communication canon - that express this Western, English-speaking bias? While we accept there are many reasons to explain these observations that are well outside 'conditions of our own making' as researchers- the availability of research funding in different institutional and national contexts for a start - we persist to ask what are the consequences for Environmental Communication scholarship? What are some of the possibilities and perils that accompany this bias for the depth and breadth of its scholarship? How might the idea of the field be impacted when these national flows - that affirm the cultural and ideological biases of the West - are so evident and pronounced?

Our pre/post-conference will build upon existing scholarship, to further reflect on where we have been, how we arrived here and where we'd like to go. We do not seek a conclusion where we will define the field (as we reject this as impossible or undesirable). It would be contradictory to impose the very limits we seek to explore and to some extent dismantle. We do invite participants to canvas the antagonisms that impact Environmental Communication scholarship, that simmer beneath this field as it navigates its terrain during a time in history when its object is the frontline of global and local crises.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Environmental communication and gender
- Environmental communication and the non-human
- Environmental communication and the idea of democracy
- The geopolitics of environmental communication
- Indigenous and First Nations people and environmental communication
- Environmental communication and political economy
- Temporal and spatial considerations in environmental communication
- Environmental communication and critical theory
- Environmental communication and science
- Environmental communication and technology

**Submission guidelines:**

We invite 250-300 word abstracts (not including references) **DUE FEBRUARY 10, 2024 EXTENDED TO FEBRUARY 17, 2024.**

We welcome quantitative, qualitative, critical, and rhetorical scholarship and all combinations therein. We encourage approaches such as case studies using interviews, ethnography, focus groups, textual analysis, critical discourse analysis, as well as surveys, experiments, quantitative content analysis, and meta-analysis of evaluative data. Regardless of method or approach, all presentations should seek to bridge theory and practice, and should be written in a style that is broadly accessible to an interdisciplinary audience.

We also welcome registrations for those wishing to attend and participate as observers.

Places are limited so please register [here](#) and we will do our best to accommodate you. Preference will be given to those presenting their work.

**Key dates:**

- Abstracts DUE: 17 February 2024
- Decision to Authors: 28 February 2024
- Post conference: 26 June 2024

**Location:** Griffith University Gold Coast Campus (a short monorail ride from the ICA conference venue).

Questions: Please contact either Kerrie Foxwell-Norton: [K.Foxwell@griffith.edu.au](mailto:K.Foxwell@griffith.edu.au) or Hanna E Morris: [hanna.morris@utoronto.ca](mailto:hanna.morris@utoronto.ca)

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\* Provocation to Possibility is a collaboration between the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) - Environment, Science and Risk Communication Working Group; the International Communication Association (ICA) – Environmental Communication Division; The International Environmental Communication Association (IECA); and the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) – Science and Environment Communication Section.